

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended)

A tube assembly for specimen analysis, comprising:

2 a tube having a pipette portion extending from a lower
end portion thereof, said pipette portion having a passage
4 therethrough, and

 a separator having an upper portion sealingly engaged in
6 a lower portion of the tube, said ~~tube-~~ separator having a ~~reduced-~~
lower portion of reduced cross-section defining a passage, whereby
8 upon the filling of the tube to a predetermined level and the
centrifuging thereof, centrifuged liquid passes through said
10 separator passage to provide a specimen of predetermined volume
defined below the separator and above a lower end of said reduced
12 lower separator portion.

2. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein:

2 said separator has a generally funnel configuration, and
an air pocket is defined between the tube, the separator upper
4 portion and an end of the reduced lower separator portion.

3. (currently amended) A tube assembly according to
2 Claim 2, wherein a predetermined volume of a specimen to be
expressed is defined by said air pocket between a separator
4 lower portion and said tube pipette portion.

4. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 3, wherein the
2 predetermined volume of specimen comprises 0.1 ml.

5. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein said
2 separator is sealingly engaged by force-fitting thereof in a
tapered portion of the tube.

6. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein:

2 specimen liquid and sediment are automatically mixed
during centrifuging by operation of the operator and an air
4 pocket created thereby.

7. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein said tube
2 is tapered to narrow toward its lower portion and said separator
is force-fitted in a lower portion of the tube.

8. (original)

2 A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein a bead
is disposed about an upper open end of the tube for sealing
engagement with a cap to close the tube.

9. (original)

2 A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein said tube
pipette portion passage is tapered inwardly toward its opening.

10. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 1, and further
2 comprising:

a plug for sealing engagement in said pipette passage,

4 said plug being disposed in a cup adapted to engage a lower
portion of the tube when the plug is inserted in said pipette
6 passage.

11. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 10, wherein:

2 upon removal of said plug from the pipette passage, a
limited lowering of pressure within the tube tends to retain
4 liquid from dropping through the pipette passage.

12. (currently amended)

A tube assembly for specimen analysis, comprising:

2 a tube having a pipette portion extending from a lower end
portion thereof, said pipette portion having a passage therethrough,

4 a plug for sealing engagement in said pipette passage,

a cap for sealingly closing an upper open end portion of
6 the tube, and

a separator having an upper portion sealingly engaged in
8 the tube, said ~~tube~~ separator having a reduced lower portion
defining a passage, whereby upon the filling of the tube to a
10 predetermined level and the centrifuging thereof, centrifuged
liquid passes through said separator passage to provide a specimen
12 of predetermined volume defined ~~below-~~ between the separator and
~~above-a-lower-end-of-the-reduced-lower-separator-portion-~~ lower
14 portion and the tube pipette portion for expressing ~~thereof-~~
of the specimen upon removal of said plug.

13. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 12, wherein:

2 said separator has a generally funnel configuration, and
an air pocket is defined between the tube, the separator upper
4 portion and an end of the reduced lower separator portion.

14. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 12, wherein said
2 predetermined volume of specimen comprises 0.1 ml.

15. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 13, wherein:

2 specimen liquid and sediment are automatically mixed
during centrifuging by operation of the separator and an air
4 pocket created thereby.

16. (original)

2 A tube assembly according to Claim 12, wherein said tube is tapered to narrow toward its lower portion and said separator is force-fitted in a lower portion of the tube.

17. (original)

2 A tube assembly according to Claim 12, wherein a bead is disposed about an upper open end of the tube for sealing engagement with said cap.

18. (original)

2 A tube assembly according to Claim 12, wherein said plug is disposed in a cup adapted to engage a lower portion of the tube when the plug is inserted in said pipette passage.

19. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 18, wherein:

2 upon removal of said plug from the pipette passage, a
limited lowering of pressure within the tube tends to retain
4 liquid from dropping through the pipette passage.

20. (currently amended)

A tube assembly ~~according to claim 1, and further-~~
2 for specimen analysis, comprising:

4 a tube having a pipette portion extending from a lower
end portion thereof, said pipette portion having a passage
therethrough,

6 a separator having an upper portion sealingly engaged in a
lower portion of the tube, said separator having a lower portion
8 of reduced cross-section defining a passage, whereby upon the
filling of the tube to a predetermined level and the centrifuging
10 thereof, centrifuged liquid passes through said separator passage
to provide a specimen of predetermined volume defined below the
12 separator and above a lower end of said reduced lower separator
portion,

14 a plug adapted to seat about said pipette passage to seal
the passage,

16 a spring disposed between the plug and the separator to urge
the plug to close the pipette passage, and

18 a pin on said plug and extending through and outwardly from
the pipette passage,

20 whereby a specimen is dispensed by urging said pin against
a specimen holder to displace the plug against the urging of the
22 spring.

21. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 20, wherein said
2 spring is an helical tapered spring.

22. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 20, wherein said
2 plug is of at least partially spherical configuration.

23. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 20, wherein said
2 pin extends to an upper end of the pipette passage to facilitate
passage of specimen through the passage.

24. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein:

2 said separator has a lower portion of reduced diameter
defining a passage therethrough, and

4 said separator is of generally hemispherical configuration
to adapt the separator to receive a generally hemispherical probe
6 of an apparatus for the drawing of specimen via a passage through
the probe for automatic processing.

25. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 24, wherein:

2 an upper edge portion of said generally hemispherical
separator is tapered to a reduced thin edge portion to engage an
4 inner wall of the tube to prevent specimen sediment from entering
between the separator and the tube wall.